

Fallston Community Area

Community Character

The Fallston Community Area is located on the western edge of Harford County. It is bounded to the west and southwest by Little Gunpowder Falls/Baltimore County, Jarrettsville Pike, Furnace Road and MD Route 23 to the north, Grafton Shop Road and Winters Run to the east, and Old Joppa Road and Jerusalem Road to the east and southeast. Located entirely within the Piedmont Plateau, the Fallston area is hilly with rounded rolling hills and deeply incised stream valleys, many of which are densely forested.

The community area is divided between the Winters Run and Little Gunpowder Falls Watersheds. Winters Run is a main tributary flowing into the Bush River, and is addressed in the Bush River Watershed Management Plan of 2003. Streams in the Winters Run watershed have been identified as being of high quality with good biodiversity. The designation of Water Source Protection Areas in the Winters Run Watershed reflects the need to continue protection of this water resource. The remaining drainage area in Fallston is part of the Little Gunpowder Falls watershed, which is primarily protected through the Gunpowder State park.

“Old Fallston”, a Quaker settlement and one of the oldest historical components of the Fallston Community Area, consists of a collection of frame dwellings, stores, and churches all surrounded by large lawns and shaded by venerable trees, with structures placed in an informal manner along the streets. The historic village of “Old Fallston” largely exists because of the Little Falls Meetinghouse which was established by William Amos II around 1740. This building and its surrounding burial ground is a designated County Historic Landmark. Another noted County Historic Landmark in the greater Fallston area is the 18th century house Bon Air; one of the few dwellings in the State to display the influence of French architectural thinking. Its builder was an émigré Frenchman.

Completed in 1884, the Maryland and Pennsylvania Railroad crossed the middle of the community area from Little Gunpowder Falls to Fallston and Vale, connecting Baltimore to York, Pennsylvania. This railroad provided market access for dairy products from the area farms. The small, historically significant crossroad settlements of Vale, High Point, and Pleasantville are also located within this planning area.

The Fallston Community Area is serviced by a network of rural arterial highways which provide easy access to the attractions, services and employment opportunities within the entire Baltimore area. U.S. Route 1 is a major thoroughfare passing through Fallston, connecting to Bel Air to the northeast and Baltimore to the southwest. Other roads such as MD Route 147 (Harford Road), MD Route 165, and Pleasantville Road also connect the Fallston area to Baltimore County.

MD Route 152 is the community area’s primary north-south artery. It generally follows the natural ridge dividing the Little Gunpowder Falls watershed from the Winters Run watershed. The major routes of MD Route 146 and MD Route 23 also connect Fallston to the rest of the County and region but are located at the edge of the community area. The Fallston Community Area is served by two Maryland Transit Authority (MTA) Park and Ride lots that also serve as stops for the MTA’s Commuter Bus line. This bus connects Fallston to the Baltimore region through White Marsh and on to downtown Baltimore. Also located in Fallston is the Fallston Airport, a small private airpark servicing mostly recreational pilots, with limited private commercial usage.

Public safety and law enforcement in the community area is provided by the Harford County Sheriff's Office and the Maryland State Police. Volunteer fire and ambulance service is provided by two stations operated by the Fallston Volunteer Fire Company (Figure 62). Additional fire and EMS support is provided by the Bel Air, Jarrettsville, and Joppa-Magnolia companies. Students within the Fallston Community Area attend Youth's Benefit Elementary School, Fallston Middle and Fallston High School. However, some children within the community area may also attend Forest Lakes, Jarrettsville or the newly completed Red Pump Elementary and North Harford Middle School. A private school in the community area serves students from the community and region.

In addition to the Fallston branch of the Harford County Public Library, the amount of public and private open space in the Fallston Community Area is another major asset. The Fallston Recreation Complex, which includes the Veronica "Roni" Chenoweth Activities Center, Reckord Road Park and the historic Edgeley Grove Farm and Annies Playground, all provide opportunities for active sporting and recreation.

Edgeley Grove Farm and Park is the current southern terminus of the Ma & Pa Trail, which traverses through Bel Air and Forest Hill. Edgeley Grove is also home to Annie's playground and garden, and it attracts visitors from throughout the region. In the western portion of the community area, in the Little Gunpowder Falls stream valley, is Gunpowder State Park. This park offers residents miles of back woods hiking and mountain biking opportunities on a large network of trails that run within the Gunpowder State Park system. Another popular recreational point located in the Fallston Community Area is Ladew Topiary Gardens. In addition, the East Coast Greenway passes through the community area following MD Route 23.

With the majority of the community area being outside of the Development Envelope, the primary land use designation is agricultural. Agriculture is, and has been, an important part of the community area's history, and agricultural uses still comprise 45% of the land use in the community area (Figure 63). The primary agricultural operations continue to be grain, along with some dairy, and beef operations, and these are supported by agricultural land preservation efforts. Preservation efforts in the community area have resulted in just over 2,700 acres being preserved, and the continuation of this effort is enhanced by the 2001 designation of the Manor Rural Legacy Area.

However, because of Fallston's proximity to major transportation routes and the Baltimore metropolitan area labor market, the Fallston Community Area has also experienced significant development pressure. Housing is almost exclusively single family detached on larger estate lots or on farmsteads, and residential uses comprise just over 36% of the area.

Also within the community area is the Rural Village of Upper Cross Roads and two small commercial areas – one at the intersection of Pleasantville Road and MD Route 152 and one at "Old Fallston" centered around the Fallston Post Office. These areas address smaller scale retail needs and provide community focal points for the residents of the Fallston Community Area. The primary commercial district in the community area, however, occurs in the Development Envelope along the U.S. Route 1 corridor. This corridor continues to evolve through a combination of redevelopment and new construction that includes residential and commercial uses.

Fallston Demographic Profile 2000 -2020

	2000	2010	2020	2000-2010 Percent Change
Total Population	17,199	18,809	19,934	9.4%
Total Households	5,894	6,525	6,892	10.7%
Employment	6,737	6,672	7,364	-1.0%
Median Household Income	\$78,175	\$103,233		32.1%
Population by Race/Hispanic Origin				
White	16,703	17,841		6.8%
Black	147	325		121.1%
American Indian/Alaska Native	27	44		63.0%
Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	179	299		67.0%
Other Race alone	24	82		241.7%
Population of 2 or more Races	119	218		83.2%
Hispanic Heritage	143	316		121.0%

Figure 61

In the 2010 Census, the Fallston area had a population of 18,809, which is 5.1% of the County's total population (Figure 61). Between 2000 and 2010, the population grew by 9.4%, which is below the County's 12% growth rate. The greatest population increases occurred in the 65 and older age groups. The number of community residents 85 and older increased by 52.4% going from 145 residents to 221, while those in the 65 to 84 year old age group increased by 46.3%. The next largest increase occurred in the 20 to 24 year old age group which increased by 40.2%. Two groups lost population; the 25-44 year old age group declined 14% while the number of children 4 and under declined 3.0%. Fallston has a greater proportion of 5 to 19 year olds and 45 to 84 year olds than the County as a whole, but proportionally fewer very young and elderly.

During the past decade, the number of new households increased 10.7% to a total of 6,525. Throughout the County, household income increased by about 32.6%. In Fallston, the increase in median household income was slightly less at 32.1%, (\$103,233). The community has almost 52% of its households earning over \$100,000 a year, compared to only 33.6% for the County. Likewise, Fallston (at 17.5%) is well below the County's proportion (30.2%) of households earning under \$50,000. Employment within the community actually declined slightly during the last decade (-1%) to an estimated 6,672.

Plan for the Area

The Fallston Community Area consists of a mix of agricultural, residential, and commercial uses. The plan for the area supports the protection of the community area's rural character while providing a transition from the Development Envelope to the rural areas (Figure 64). Land use in the area is predominately agricultural with rural residential housing and small clusters of commercial uses.

This community area also contains a small portion of the Development Envelope along the U.S. Route 1 corridor from MD Route 152, east to Bel Air. The Development Envelope boundary has undergone a minor adjustment along the commercial corridor to reflect existing zoning and to help address septic system problems. This area is adjacent to the Fallston Sanitary Subdistrict. The Fallston Sanitary Subdistrict was legislatively established to provide capacity to those properties within the sanitary subdistrict. Sewage capacity is limited in the subdistrict and therefore sewer service is not guaranteed.

Within the community area, the existing inventory of commercially zoned land is sufficient to serve the community, and many opportunities for redevelopment exist. Continuing the form and function of the Upper Crossroads Rural Village without impacting the surrounding community is also important; therefore no expansion of the Rural Village is supported by this Plan.

Growing concerns from within the community and from the State about water quality and agricultural viability issues need to be addressed. As a starting point for addressing some of these concerns, the Rural Residential designation has been removed from the Fallston Community Area. This supports the community's goal of encouraging the continuation of agriculture operation and it will help to achieve TMDL requirements by reducing the number of future septic systems.

To preserve the rural feel and heritage of Fallston, along with protecting ground and surface water resources, land preservation efforts should continue as part of the Fallston Community Area Plan.

The protection of agricultural resources is important to Harford County and the residents of Fallston. Currently, none of Fallston is within the established Priority Preservation Area. Expansion of the PPA to include the Manor Rural Legacy Area should be explored as a mechanism to increase agricultural protection in this area. The other agricultural clusters in the community area should also be evaluated and considered for inclusion in the PPA. In order to support the continuation of the County's agricultural industry, the 2012 Plan calls for the development and adoption of a revised Transfer of Development Rights Program. The TDR program should encourage the sending of development rights from agriculturally designated areas to the designated growth areas which should be considered as potential receiving areas.

Because of the fragmented nature of some of Fallston's agricultural land, potential conflicts could exist between traditional farming operations and the surrounding residential uses. The noise and dust produced by farming equipment may be perceived as a nuisance, as well as the delays that sometimes occur on local roads as tractors and other equipment travel past residential areas to reach other agricultural areas. Incentives and assistance programs to convert these farms into organic farms or high-value agriculture ventures should be developed for agricultural properties that may no longer be suitable for conventional agriculture. These agriculture methods are ideal for smaller fragmented farms because they produce high value products such as fruits, vegetables and nursery plants that require more manual labor and reduce the need for tractors or large contiguous tracts of land. Organic and high-value farming also provide a boost to the local economy because they make local products available to residents and organic markets, restaurants, and grocery stores.

Maintaining the quality and quantity of surface and groundwater is a primary concern of the residents of this community area. Much of the community is designated as a Priority Water Resource Area by the State with Winters Run and Little Gunpowder Falls being designated Tier II watersheds by the Federal Clean Water Act. Winters Run is also a vital water supply to customers served by Maryland American Water. These water bodies will be subject to the new TMDL targets being established as part of the Phase II Watershed Implementation Plan. The protection of water quality in both the Winter's Run and Little Gunpowder Falls watersheds will be implemented through retaining and recreating vegetated buffers and preserving undeveloped land.

The Phase II WIP will set goals for nutrient reduction levels that need to be met or exceeded. These levels will influence future agricultural activities and will also influence development utilizing septic systems. Nutrient trading should be evaluated as a potential tool that can be used within the community area to improve regional water quality, and this strategy should be evaluated in relation to

maintaining local agricultural operations. Strategies that can be used within the Development Envelope to help achieve these reduction levels include reducing impervious surfaces and retrofitting existing development with best management practices for stormwater. Implementing adequate stream buffers must be part of the community's resource preservation efforts.

Because a portion of the Fallston Community Area has experienced groundwater quality issues, residents remain concerned about impacts to the area's bedrock aquifers. Continued coordination with the Maryland Department of the Environment is supported to ensure that water quality monitoring and remediation continues as needed. Attention needs to be given to limiting future development and impervious cover within the remainder of undeveloped areas of the community to ensure continued availability of clean drinking water to the community and to protect groundwater and wells.

Redevelopment should be encouraged within the existing Development Envelope and the Rural Village of Upper Crossroads. The village of Upper Crossroads is located at the intersection of MD Routes 152 and 165. Limited commercial development is recognized in the Rural Village, and this development should support the needs of local residents and the farming industry. Opportunities for the redevelopment and expansion of existing businesses are supported as long as the development is compatible with surrounding development and the agricultural character of the area. Starting with the Rural Village Study revised design standards should be established that will help to retain or restore the original character of the Village. These standards should also address changes in technology, such as electronic signage, that can impact rural character throughout the County.

Another cluster of business uses exists at the intersection of MD Route 152 and Pleasantville Road. These properties currently are not part of a Rural Village. This Plan supports the continuation of these uses at their existing intensity with the ability to make minor changes as supported by the community.

The U.S. Route 1 Commercial Corridor is seen as a gateway to the Fallston Community and should have the aesthetics to support the community. Although recent commercial development in the area promises to bring new services to the community, other large anchoring properties are in need of redevelopment. Land use designations along this corridor have been modified to reflect existing zoning and land use patterns. Nevertheless, development in the U.S. Route 1 corridor is subject to water and sewer availability within the Fallston Sanitary Sewer Sub-district.

A Vision for the U.S. Route 1 Corridor was created by the State Highway Administration addressing the community's preference for additional landscaping and screened parking. Elements of the vision were addressed by new guidelines for signs, landscaping, and building setbacks and materials during the 2008 update of the Zoning Code. Revitalization, renovations, and new development along this corridor should continue to be coordinated with State and local highway authorities to insure safe and effective traffic flows.

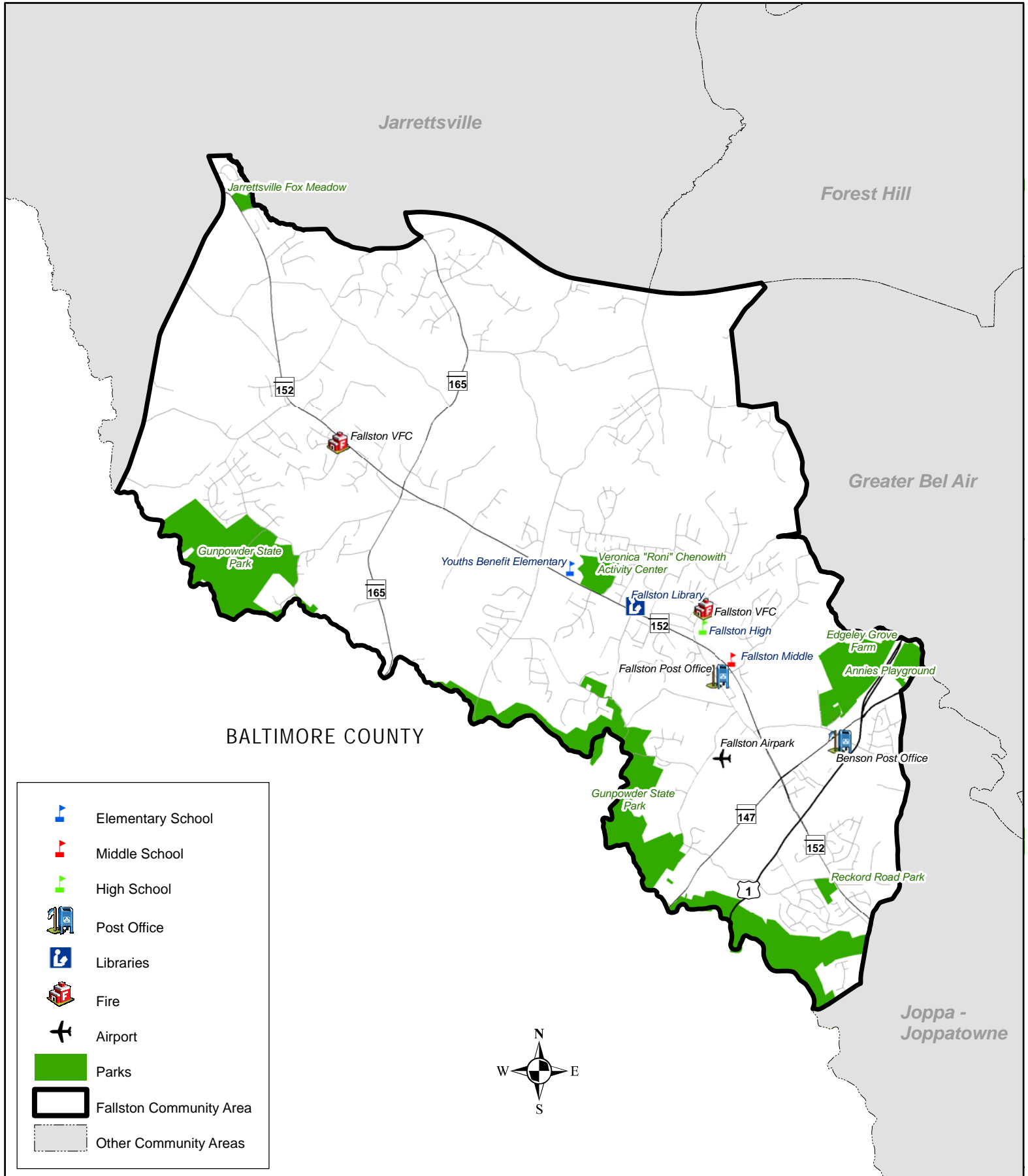
Traffic in the Fallston Community Area has increased as a result of continued growth. Major traffic issues occur during peak travel hours. More people have chosen to live in Fallston and commute to Baltimore County and City for work and regional services. The community has seven different connections with Baltimore County, five along State highways and two are along local roads. The County and the State need to carefully manage safety improvements to serve the existing community residents including ingress and egress issues at the Fallston Mall site. The provision of safe pedestrian and bicycle facilities should also be incorporated into roadway projects wherever feasible.

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COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Fallston Community Area

Harford County, Maryland



EXISTING LAND USE

Fallston Community Area

Harford County, Maryland

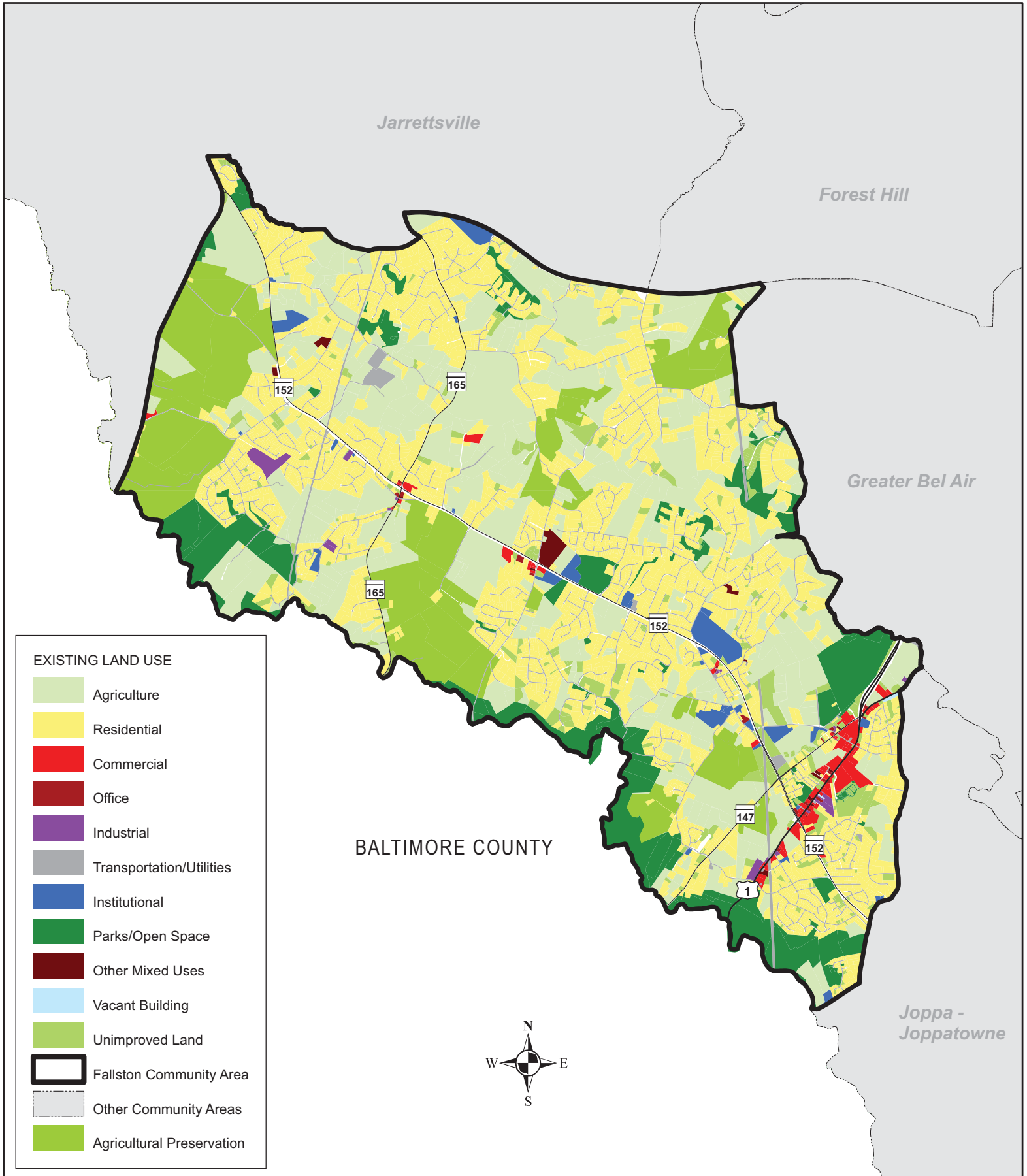


Figure 63

LAND USE MAP

Fallston Community Area

Harford County, Maryland

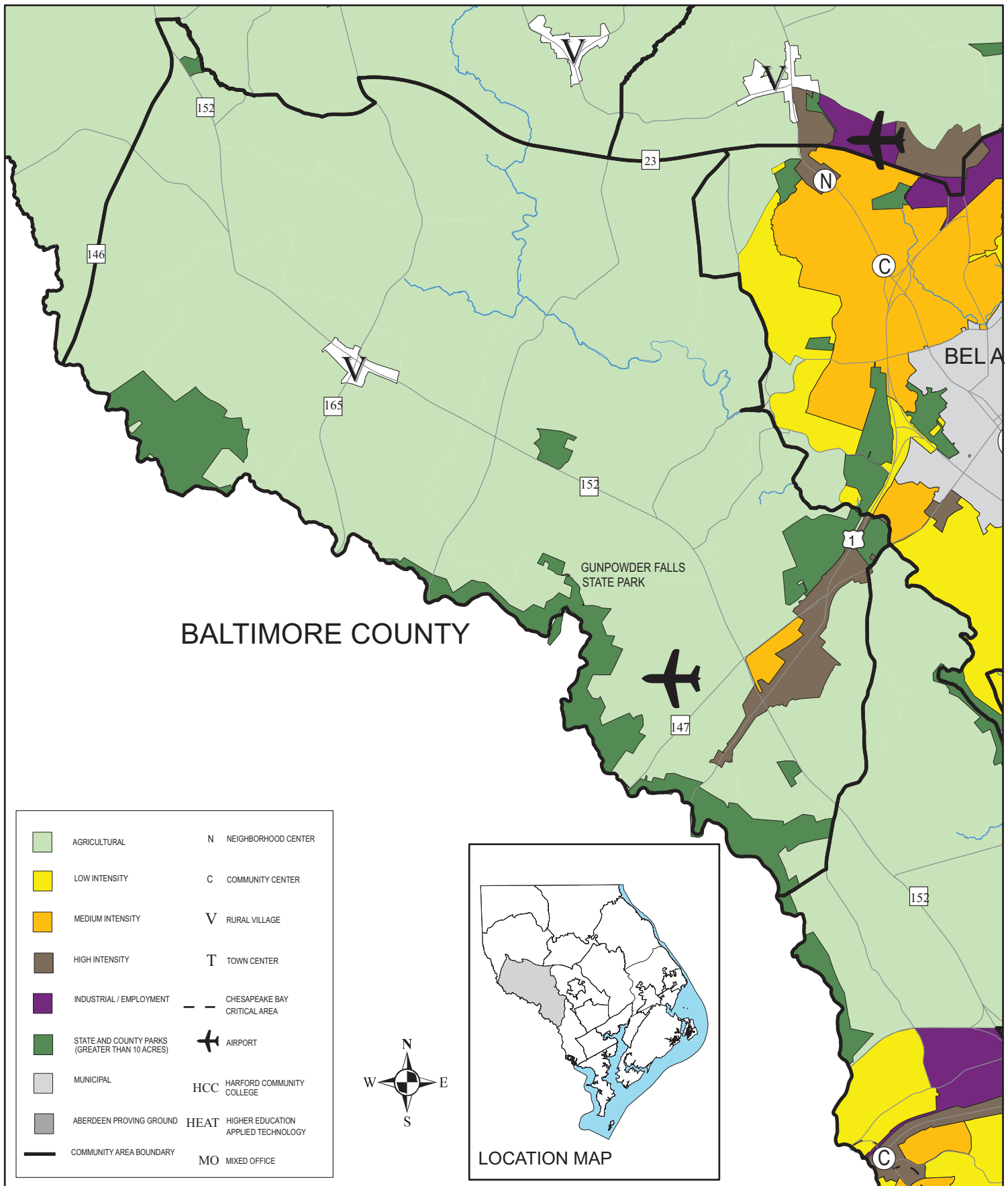


Figure 64

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